

Board of Finance

Approved 4/23/2012

Board of Finance reviews Board of Selectmen Budget FY 2012-2013

Monday March 5, 2012 7:00 PM

Town Hall Meeting Room

Present: Board of Finance members Michael Carter, Steve Ezzes, Jerry Sargent, Mike O'Brien, Patty Kopas, Melissa Koller and David Finkel, Town Administrator Tom Landry, Finance Director Rick Darling, First Selectman Gayle Weinstein, Secretary Donna M. Anastasia, , Susan Moran Registrar of Voters, Karen Tatarka Library Director, several Library Board members, John Ojarovsky Director of Communications, Charity Nichols Tax Collector, Joe Lametta Highway Department, John Troxell Chief of Police, Sharon Shattuck Information Systems, Lynne Langlois Historic District Commission and Library Board, Fire Marshal John Pokorny, Parks and Recreation Director Dave Ungar, several Parks and Recreation board members, Steve Lemanski Consulting Actuary of Milliman and several others in attendance.

Chairman Sargent called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM

Discussion: Milliman/OPEB Report Steve Lemanski

The current evaluation shows a similar population as compared with the last study with minor changes in current plan provisions. Despite a slight increase for Highway and Dispatch the liability impact is modest. There was also an increase incurred due to modification changes with MERF and recent GASB¹ changes.

There were some changes that reduced the liability such as demographics (current retirees dropping coverage; reduction in Town employee benefits expenses and HSAs) An approximate 563K reduction.

There were also gains on investments a better return than expected; at this time we are using market value for our assets. A method many are using now is the "smoothing" method (gains and losses relative to the investment and smoothing it over a 5 year period of time for example)

There was general discussion regarding the projections such as the demographic trend, unpredictable market conditions, health care costs and when we can expect to see the figure go down. Although Mr. Lemanski feels there are no spikes this time around it is a possibility down the road. Inflation and health care costs have been built in and the ultimate rate would not be reached for 45 years. Based on the actuaries and the 8 year amortization schedule and paying it down the town should level off at year eight. Gains/losses of 100-200K are more likely than the recent gain of 1.5M

¹ See minutes of October 13,2011 for new GASB requirements

Mr. Landry offered to put a model together which would offer the board more than the one established model.

Mr. Sargent would like to have a more in depth discussion with the board members at a later meeting.

Power point Presentation by First Selectman Gayle Weinstein

Ms. Weinstein went over property taxes, maintaining town services, improving infrastructure, and working towards a zero based approach for the budget. Economic indicators, unemployment, Social services statistics, foreclosures, permits, additions and remodeling, new generators and Grand list growth was presented. There were some decreases in accounts i.e. solid waste, parks and fields, Middle school pool and Youth and Social Services. Capital budget items were presented with 255K for the paving of 3 roads, Pent bridge needs to be replaced which unfortunately does not come under the same grant guidelines as did the Valley Forge Bridge. She went over the wetlands mitigation cost still pending, renovations that need to be done at the school and the vehicle sinking fund. The budget has built in a proposed use of the Capital reserve fund and some special funds as offsets.

She went over town revenues and tax collection rates which would result in a 0.7% mill rate increase.

With no questions from the floor Ms. Weinstein concluded her presentation.

Board of Finance reviews First Selectman's Budget Request

Department

Administration and Finance

There was general discussion regarding staffing, salaries, full time and part time employees and how this is determined and prior employee changes.

General Administration

This year the town has supported the Food Pantry in addition to Interfaith Housing. There was some discussion regarding the current cleaning services company for the town.

Information Systems

One comment regarding the server sharing with the Board of Education.

Probate Court

Elections/Registrars

This account was increased due to a Primary, Referendum and State Election this year.

Board of Finance

Assessor

Tax Collector

Board of Assessment Appeals

Legal Counsel

Several board members expressed concern regarding the underfunding of this item.

Town Clerk

Historic District Commission

Planning & Zoning

Zoning Board of Appeals

Conservation Commission

Building Inspector

Building Committee

Public Safety

Volunteer Fire Department

There was some discussion regarding training costs of \$12,400. and estimated projections on various equipment. There was some discussion regarding the decrease in maintenance to cover other costs in the budget and several members felt maintenance costs should not be cut to cover other costs considering the nature of this service.

There was discussion regarding the recent storms, number of calls and maintenance efforts.

Fire calls and equipment usage has increased 22% since 2009.

Fire Marshal

Additional hours were added to this budget for extra school projects coming up this year.

Animal Control

Communications Center

There was some discussion on call volume and a break down of the calls i.e. false alarms both fire and burglar alarms and the handling of these calls. Also discussed was the possible regionalizing of the department.

SW Connecticut Emergency Med Services

Emergency Med Communication Services

Regional Paramedic

Police Services

There was discussion with Chief Troxell regarding the overtime. Initial overtime was due to a retiree and an officer called out on military duty. 40K in overtime resulted due to the storms and a portion of which will be reimbursed (estimated 35-40K). In addition some remaining overtime may be offset by a reduction in salaries not being paid out.

Chief Troxell discussed the possibility of a straight time person who would fill in to cover many overtime hours.

Public Works – Highway

There was discussion regarding snow removal and year end offsets. Also discussed was the status of repaving roads (3). There was some discussion regarding the effect of utility companies digging up roads thus shortening the life span of the road.

Sanitarian – Health

Solid Waste Disposal

Although the amount of garbage is down and tonnage is down Mr. Lametta explained that the volume does not effect revenues. The potential for revenue is with recycling but would require aggressive education and coordination. This also includes metals and computer equipment which would yield additional revenue.

Westport Weston Health District

Weston Water Utility

School/Town Water Supply

Human Resources and Development

Human Services

Youth Services

There was a brief discussion on WOW programs and the Youth Services position.

Senior Services

There has been an increase in seniors participating in the Town's Senior programs and the possibility of expanding the space at the Senior Center (Hurlbutt). There is an increase in the Dial A Ride requests as well.

Gary Betsworth, Chairman of the Arts Commission made some comments regarding the seniors attending many events the commission offers.

Public Library

There was discussion regarding the recent upgrade in technology. Director Karen Tatarka, discussed her ideas on future plans; the library being more than a book depository but more a gathering place for our residents. The library currently appeals to our traditional users and invests in our technology side to benefit the “new” users. We are playing catch up right now with very old computers. During the storms the library had approximately 800 people per day using the library. Many people became aware of this resource as a result.

IT has installed a new switch and router but we are playing catch up right now with very old computers.

Popular fiction, popular non-fiction and history are very popular in town. Interestingly non-fiction books originally purchased for research are actively being circulated.

Parks and Recreation

Recreation Department

Tom Landry went over the Enterprise Fund going back about 10 years. The fund had not been managed properly in the past. We had set a target before sweeping any money (money came in from camp and programs) and over the last couple of years it has done well allowing it to be utilized. Mr. Sargent asked if we have looked at the fund as a profit/loss type account. P & R Chairman Eric Albert went over the new on line registration system and some of the programs. Mr. Sargent would encourage the board to review price per program numbers. It would afford the opportunity to look at numbers and possibly cover costs with ease. Director Dave Ungar explained that currently there are 2 programs being used which will be merged at some time in the future allowing an expenditure/revenue report.

There was some discussion regarding the waiving of fees for the pond which in doing so has drastically increased the number of participants. Mr. Sargent suggested that hopefully the department could make up the revenue somewhere else.

Parks and Fields

Middle School Pool

Capital improvements has reduced this item. Split usage has been the same for many years.

Debt Service

Municipal Debt- Interest

Municipal Debt - Principal

Capital Budget

Town/School Capital Budget

1. Vehicle Sinking Fund

General discussion regarding the sinking fund for all town vehicles

2. Bridge Repair Account

3. Assessor Revaluation

4. Town Buildings Repair

5. Rebuild Treadwell, Greenfield and Winthrop

6. Building Space Needs

7. Wetland Mitigation Project

8. DPW Fire Suppression System

9. Turf Replacement Fund

10. Bisceglie Infield Rebuild

11. School Items - *Total 485,238*

a. Hurlbutt Elementary 72,160

i. *Architectural* 72,160

b. Middle School 413,078

i. *Mechanical* 227,358

ii. *Plumbing* 57,120

iii. *Architectural* 128,600

12. Police Vehicles

13. Highway Equipment List

14. Town Vehicles

15. Parks and Recreation Tractor

16. Reconstruction Godfrey Rd

17. Kaestle Boos items

18. Middle School Library

Discussion regarding the reduction in cost of the ²Hurlbutt parking lot.

There was some discussion regarding the status of the Revson field project. Fine grading needs to be done. One area has been seen by the Town Engineer however rain and cold weather has prevented further work at this time.

With no further discussion to come before this board, meeting adjourned at 10:53 PM

Respectfully submitted

Donna M. Anastasia, Town Clerk

² Cost reduced due to P&Z restriction